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SUBJECT: FRENCH ESDP INITIATIVES POST-DEAUVILLE DEFENSE
MINISTERIAL

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[1](#)B. USNATO 365
[1](#)C. USEU 1567

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Kathleen Allegrone for reasons 1.4 b and d.

[1](#)1. (C) Summary and Comment. On October 1-2, European Union (EU) defense ministers decided on common directions for capacity-building initiatives and EU military operations at an informal ministerial in Deauville, France. As an informal ministerial, Deauville produced no formal decisions, rather general consensus on decisions that will later be formalized, in this case at the November 10 General Affairs-External Relations Council (GAERC) meeting that will involve both Foreign Ministers and Defense Ministers. The GOF is currently focused on strengthening European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) as one of their EU presidency priorities, particularly in the area of building capabilities. The Deauville meeting produced agreement on at least six concrete initiatives, or "structured capacity projects," focused on boosting equipment levels and improving ESDP processes. Col. Philippe Steininger, DAS-equivalent for EU and NATO at the MOD bureau for Strategic Affairs, provided the following readout of the decisions taken at Deauville and French ESDP plans to build on those results including more frequent Minister of Defense meetings; that said, the updated European Security Strateg (ESS) will be less robust than initially envisioned. Comment: Sarkozy has cited progress on ESDP as a precursor to French reintegration in the NATO Military Commands. The modest gains achieved at Deauville or success in meeting piracy challenges will help solidify support for this decision. End summary and Comment.

BUILDING ON DEAUVILLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Reinforcing Capacities

[1](#)2. (C) In addition to specific initiatives, the EU defense ministers agreed on a "variable geometry" model that allows any subset of EU member-states to contribute to any given project once it receives the political blessing of the 27 member-states. Among the first concrete proposals is the European Air Transport Fleet (EATF) initiative, a long-term project to create a multinational fleet of Airbus A400Ms. Steininger said the effort would build on existing common support efforts for the A400M and include France, Germany, Belgium, and maybe Spain, but probably not the UK. RefTel A reports that about 10 countries agreed on combined crew training, with individual countries leasing out their planes on a timeshare basis to provide training aircraft, or using common funding for a multinational fleet of training planes based on national fleets. Other key aspects of improving projection capabilities approved at Deauville include increasing aero-naval interoperability and securing contributions to the so-called "helicopter trust fund."

¶3. (C) Cooperation in military space observation was also agreed to at Deauville. Steininger clarified that the initiative will include both surveillance of space and surveillance of Earth from space. On the former, he said existing French and German systems will be made more interoperable and send more data to the EU satellite center in Torrejon, Spain. On observations from space, he said six European partners will increase the interoperability of national satellite programs in a cooperative "system of systems" with the generation of satellites to replace the French Helios, German SAR-Lupe, Italian COSMO-SkyMed, etc. This program, called Musis, for Multinational Satellite Information System, could also add an international ground system to the network of national systems and would also send data to Torrejon.

¶4. (C) In the armaments domain, the defense ministers agreed to reinforce the role of the European Defense Agency, including in research and development. The defense ministers "supported the creation of a true internal defense market" to encourage European industry to consolidate. Steininger said the French Presidency seeks to revitalize the European defense market, in keeping with the December 2007 EU "defense package," by promoting more competition and removing regulatory barriers within Europe, including reducing exceptions to the otherwise strict codes that govern EU spending. He also said the GOF would like to revisit the Athena mechanism of common financing, but observed that financial negotiations are always difficult and the need had not yet been agreed to among the 27 member-states.

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Deployability: Making "Paper" Deployability a Reality

¶5. (C) Following the Deauville meeting, the French EU Presidency announced that standby European forces will be made more responsive for deployment in operations, especially at the battlegroup (1500) level. Steininger elaborated that while the 60,000-troop Headline Goal will be maintained, France wants the EU to focus on more concrete, realistic goals for the smaller, more frequent deployments that are more likely today. Within the 60,000-troop capability, the French envision possible simultaneous deployment of: two operations consisting of 10,000 troops; two rapid response operations at the battlegroup level; one operation to evacuate European nationals; one maritime/aerial surveillance operation; one small civil-military operation; one humanitarian operation; and 10 small civil operations, the largest of which would have 3000 personnel. Steininger said these goals, which echo to an extent the deployment capabilities set out for France in its Defense White Paper, had not yet been agreed to at the European level. The meeting did achieve consensus on the so-called "Erasmus" exchange program among military academies, modeled on successful university exchange programs but for young European officers. Steininger added that the French see a need to reinforce the EU's civilian crisis management capability, which is nominally 15,000 personnel but exists "on paper" only.

¶6. (C) The defense ministers also agreed in Deauville to reinforce cooperation on evacuation of European nationals from crisis zones. Steininger said the French would like to create geographic zones of responsibility and improve cooperation in other aspects of crisis management, including security sector reform and land demining. In addition, defense ministers agreed to "consolidate" military activities in a maritime surveillance network against illicit trafficking, which Steininger commented was focused on European waters and clandestine immigration. Networking existing national maritime surveillance systems under ESDP will be complicated since the missions fall naturally under law enforcement and domestic security, not under ESDP.

17. (C) Existing ESDP missions were also a high priority at the Deauville meeting, with EUFOR in Chad/Central African Republic and Operation ALTHEA in Bosnia reaching important decision points. On Bosnia, the ministers agreed that ALTHEA has fulfilled its initial military objectives. Steininger advised the French would prefer to end the military operation, but remain open on how the European presence could "evolve" towards reinforced civilian capacities or, per the Deauville statement, a military mission focused on training. Per ref A, consensus on the future of ALTHEA was not reached and a decision will be sought at the November GAERC.

18. (C) Regarding EUFOR, Steininger said the GOF continues to hope that the UN will take over the EUFOR mission, since the ministers agreed it has been successful in reestablishing security for refugees, internally displaced persons, and humanitarian organizations. Defense Minister Morin proposed to his counterparts in Deauville to travel together to Chad on November 22.

19. (C) The ministers also agreed to "accelerate" the planning of a formal naval operation to combat piracy off the coast of Somalia. Steininger reinforced the need to formalize EU operations to ensure maximum member-state participation. He noted that Spain, which has contributed an airplane to the current EU efforts, has no judicial statutes for prosecuting pirates. France has the same problem with the pirates currently in its custody, but can prosecute nonetheless for the kidnapping of French citizens.

FURTHER FRENCH ESDP GOALS

European Security Strategy

10. (C) The 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS) is being updated and added to by a small team working under High Representative Javier Solana. The scope of this effort represents a compromise between the French Presidency, which initially desired a comprehensive update reflecting both emerging threats and expanded EU membership, and other countries, particularly Germany, who were nervous about opening a "Pandora's box" by revisiting all aspects of the

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2003 strategy. Steininger noted wryly that a German Chancellery official who had been heavily involved in preparing the 2003 document had been influential in this compromise decision. He clarified that though some fears centered on redefining Europe's relations with Russia given the new eastern member-states, they predated the August 2008 Georgia crisis. Steininger said this compromise approach is going smoothly and that the revised ESS should be presented for approval at the December European Council meeting. The new European Security Strategy is intended to create a framework for future European capacities.

Partnerships

11. (C) Steininger called partnerships another of France's ESDP priorities. Reinforcing the need to improve on-the-ground NATO-EU cooperation, he said French expectations are low in this area. Neither the French proposals within NATO in October 2007 nor the July 2008 French-organized Paris workshop on improving NATO-EU coordination have produced concrete results. Steininger said the GOF considers progress essentially blocked by Turkey, with Greece and Cyprus in supporting roles. Nonetheless, the French Presidency continues to promote the idea of a

high-level informal coordination group between the organizations. Vis--vis the African Union, the French Presidency priority is increasing African ability to deal with African crises.

Next Steps

¶12. (C) Steininger reiterated that the decisions reached in principle at Deauville will be confirmed by the Defense Ministers at the November 10 GAERC. Follow-on agenda items will include the status of the ESDP mission in Bosnia and the capacity issues of space, air transport (support for the A400M), and aero-naval interoperability, in addition to ministerial-level discussions on the European Security Strategy and planning. The GOF supports formalizing a mechanism for Defense Ministers to meet on their own in the General Affairs Council format (in other words, similar to a GAERC for defense), not every month as do the Foreign Ministers, but on an as-needed basis. Steininger said France hopes the December European Council meeting will mark agreement to establish a small planning cell, as France has reached agreement in principle with the UK and Germany, but not yet at 27. Finally, the French Presidency hopes the Council will agree to a declaration on capacities as a capstone to France's efforts to advance ESDP during its six-month EU Presidency window.

COMMENT

¶13. (C) The Deauville topics were a subset of overall French ESDP goals, which also include areas of broad consensus such as reinforcing global security through non-proliferation, arms control, counterterrorism, and cyberdefense. Progress on ESDP has been officially cited by President Sarkozy as a precursor to French reintegration into the NATO military commands. Deauville marked one of the key steps for the six-month Presidency period during which the GOF can actively advance ESDP. As Steininger said, Defense Minister Morin's goal was for the informal ministerial to produce concrete results, which are not always easy to obtain in ESDP. We judge that though modest in scope, the deliverables of Deauville are nonetheless significant, and that further progress in ESDP by the December Council is achievable to fulfill the self-imposed French requirement for normalization within NATO. We strongly encourage USNATO and USEU efforts reflected in reftels to seek ways to complement the French-led counter-piracy initiatives that will bolster President Sarkozy's ability to solidify public support for normalized relations with NATO. Similarly, success in meeting piracy challenges will also help solidify public support for normalized relations with NATO. End comment.

STAPLETON